Climate Change Summary, Petroglyph National Monument, New Mexico

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February 19, 2015

Climate Trends for the Area within Park Boundaries

- Average annual temperature has increased since 1950, but the rate is not statistically significant (Table 1, Figure 1). Spring (March-May) temperature has increased at a statistically significant rate of 1.4 ± 0.6ºC (2.5 ± 1.1ºF.) per century.
- Average total precipitation has increased at a statistically significant rate since 1950 (Table 1, Figure 2. Precipitation has increased most in spring (March-May).
- If the world does not reduce emissions from power plants, cars, and deforestation by 40-70%, models project substantial warming and changes in precipitation (Table 1, Figure 3).
- The greatest warming could occur in autumn (September-November).
- Models projections of precipitation do not agree, with nearly half projecting increases and half projecting decreases (Figure 3).
- Projections under the highest emissions scenario project 10-20 more days per year with a maximum temperature >35ºC (95ºF.) and an increase in 20-year storms (a storm with more precipitation than any other storm in 20 years) to once every 6-10 years (Walsh et al. 2014).

Historical Impacts in the Region

- Drought and bark beetle infestations in the early 2000s caused extensive dieback of piñon pine in New Mexico forests (Breshears et al. 2005). This and numerous other cases of tree dieback around the world are consistent with climate change (Allen et al. 2010).
- Across the western U.S., including forest areas in New Mexico, climate controlled the extent of burned area from 1916 to 2003 (Littell et al. 2009).
- Analyses of Audubon Christmas Bird Count data across the United States, including counts in New Mexico, detected a northward shift of winter ranges of a set of 254 bird species at an average rate of 0.5 ± 0.3 km per year from 1975 to 2004, attributable to human climate change and not other factors (La Sorte and Thompson 2007).

Future Vulnerabilities in the Region

- Under all emissions scenarios, reduced snowfall and rainfall and increased temperature could reduce the flow of springs, streams, and rivers (Garfin et al. 2014).
- Under high emissions, wildfire frequencies could increase up to 25% by 2100 (Moritz et al. 2012).
- Under continued warming, forest drought stress could continue to cause substantial tree dieback and possible conversion of some forest to grassland (Williams et al. 2013).
- Under a high emissions scenario, invasions of the tree tamarisk (*Tamarix spp.*) could intensify in the region (Bradley et al. 2009).

Table 1. Historical rates of change per century and projected future changes in annual average temperature and annual total precipitation (data Daly et al. 2008, IPCC 2013; analysis Wang et al. in preparation). The table gives the historical rate of change per century calculated from data for the period 1950-2010. Because a rate of change per century is given, the absolute change for the 1950-2010 period will be approximately 60% of that rate. The table gives central values for the park as a whole. Figures 1-3 show the uncertainties.

	1950-2010	2000-2050	2000-2100
Historical			
temperature	+0.6ºC/century (1.1ºF./century)		
precipitation	+57%/century		
Projected (compared to 1971-2000)			
Low emissions (IPCC RCP 4.5)			
temperature		+2.2ºC (+4ºF.)	+2.8ºC (+5ºF.)
precipitation		-1%	~0
High emissions (IPCC RCP 6.0)			
temperature		+1.7ºC (+3.1ºF.)	+3.3ºC (+5.9ºF.)
precipitation		-3%	-3%
Highest emissions (IPCC RCP 8.5)			
temperature		+2.8ºC (+5ºF.)	+5.1ºC (+9.2ºF.)
precipitation		~0	-3%

Figure 1. Historical annual average temperature for the area within park boundaries. Note that the U.S. weather station network was more stable for the period starting 1950 than for the period starting 1895. (Data: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Daly et al. 2008. Analysis: Wang et al. in preparation, University of Wisconsin and U.S. National Park Service).

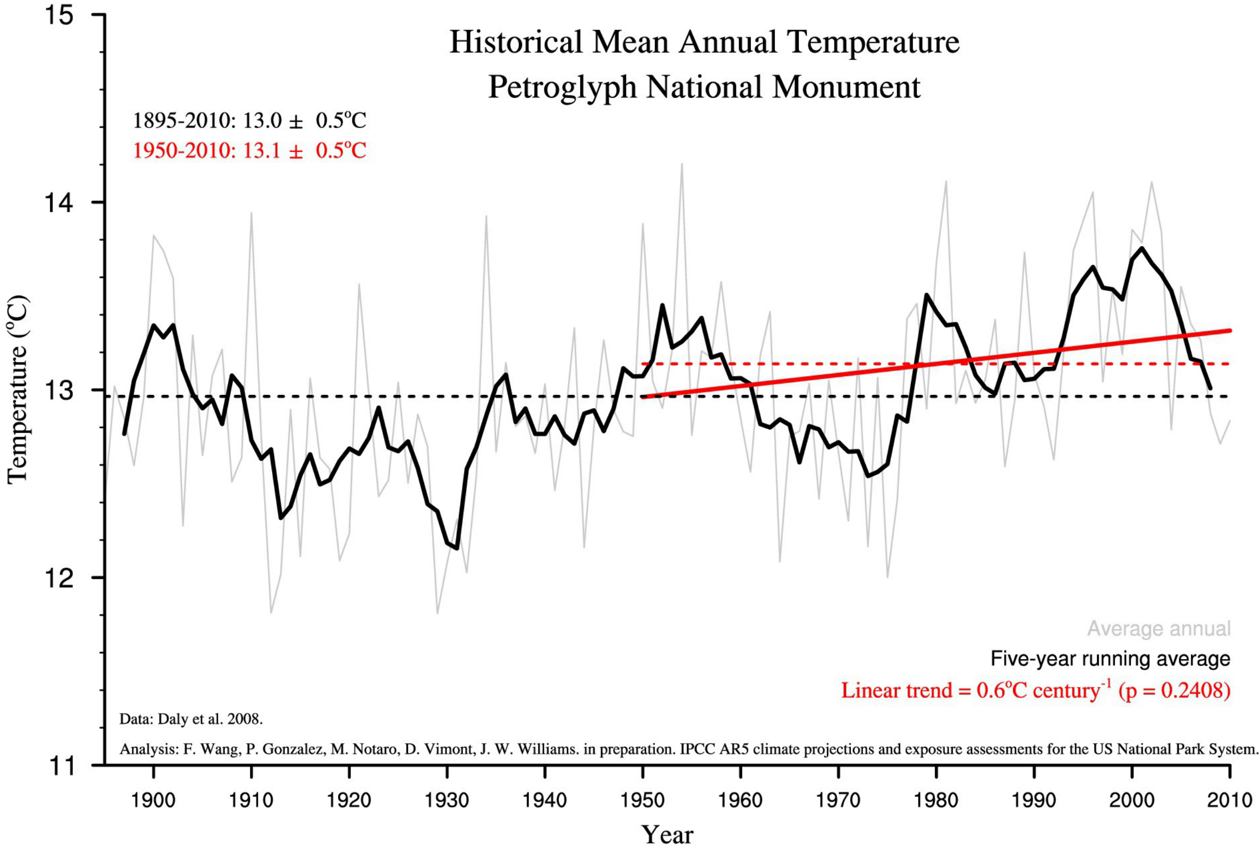


Figure 2. Historical annual total precipitation for the area within park boundaries. Note that the U.S. weather station network was more stable for the period starting 1950 than for the period starting 1895. (Data: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Daly et al. 2008. Analysis: Wang et al. in preparation, University of Wisconsin and U.S. National Park Service).

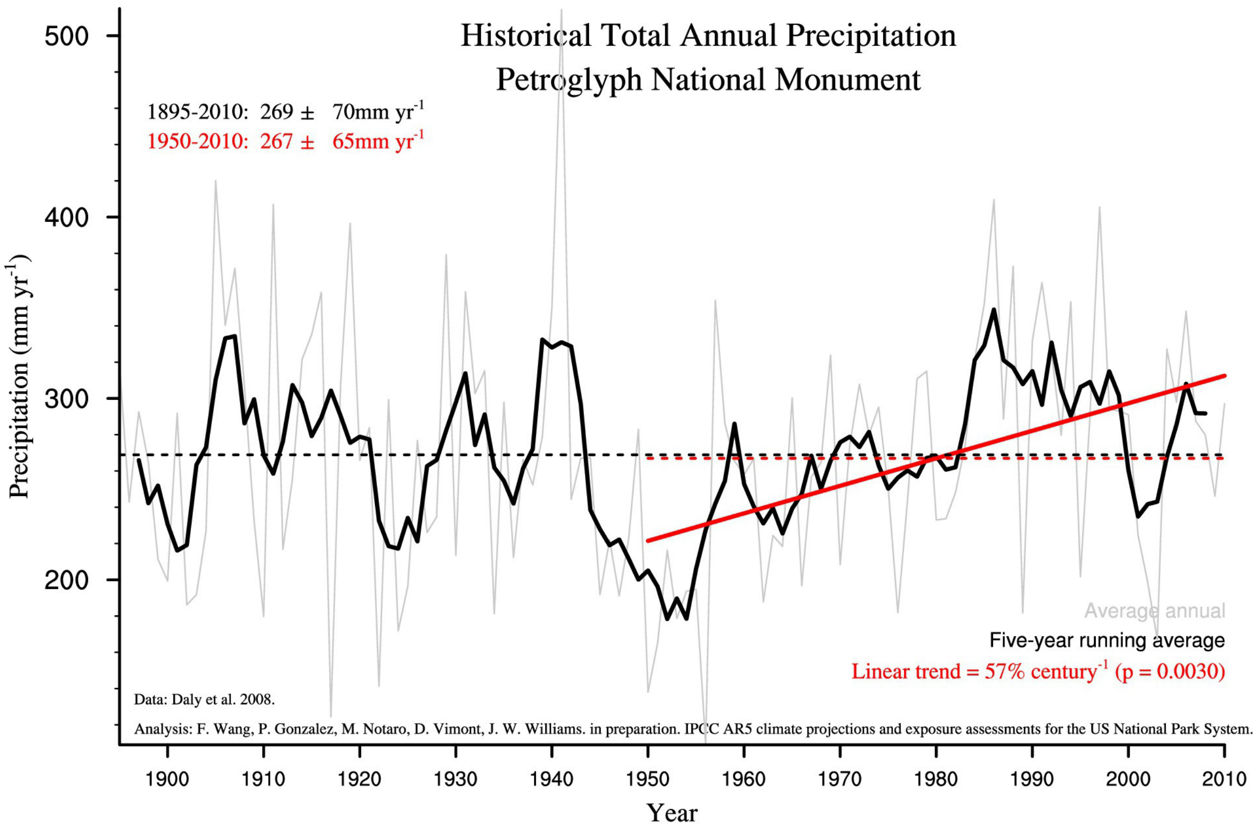
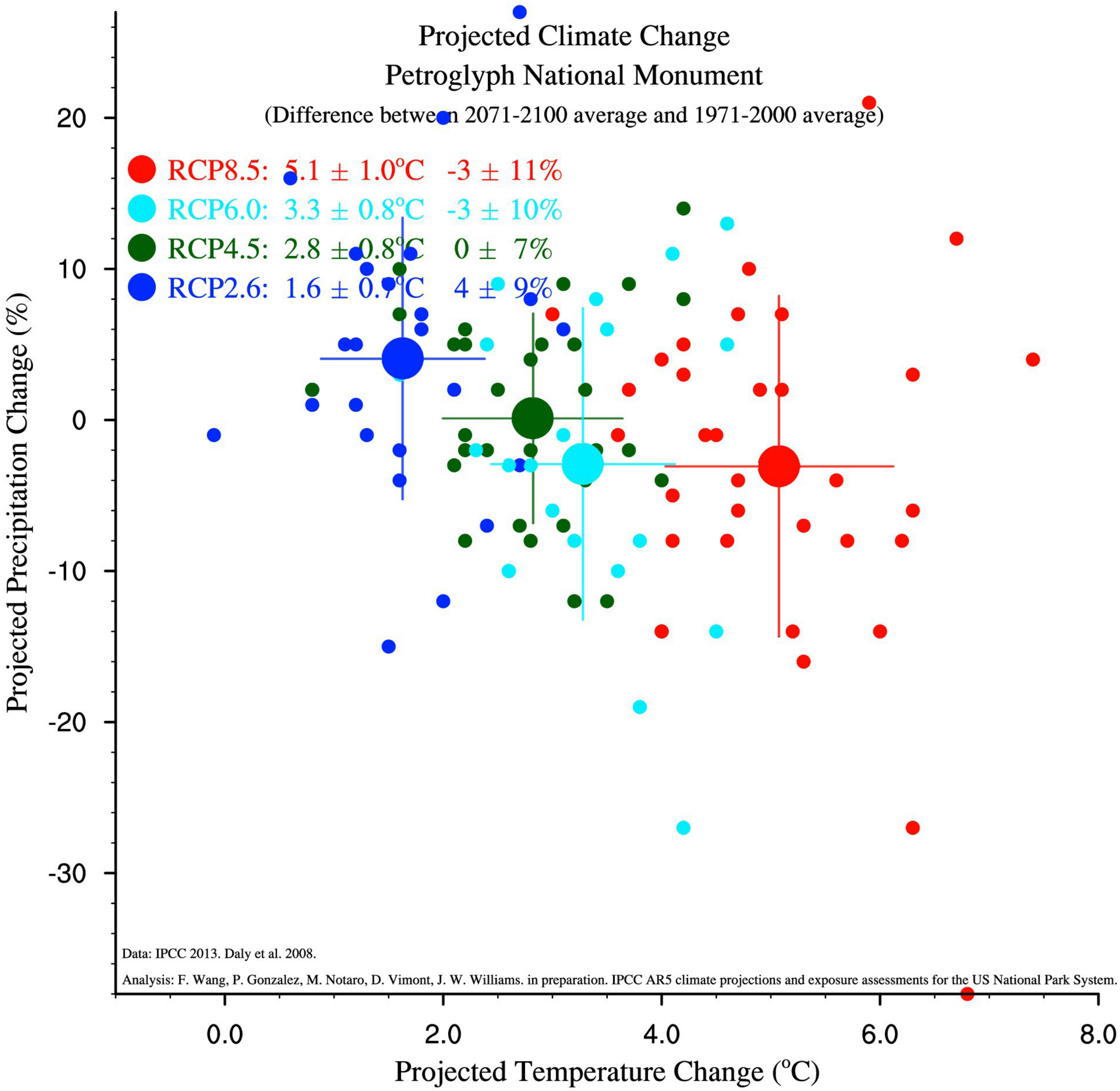


Figure 3. Projections of future climate for the area within park boundaries. Each small dot is the output of a single climate model. The large color dots are the average values for the four IPCC emissions scenarios. The lines are the standard deviations of each average value. (Data: IPCC 2013, Daly et al. 2008; Analysis: Wang et al. in preparation, University of Wisconsin and U.S. National Park Service).



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